



**(U) From Academia to the Agency (repost)**

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*What draws people to work at NSA? Here's a story from February 2004... (U)*

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(U) My life changed on 14 July 2003. That was the date of my EOD to NSA as a Language Analyst intern. At 42, I must be one of the oldest interns here, but I wear my Newbie status with pride. You see, I used to be a professor. For thirteen years I taught Greek and Roman Archaeology, Civilization, and History courses and I even had tenure. And as I continued to master those esoteric fields, repeating my lectures and courses semester after semester, I came to realize that I was falling out of love with it, having reached all my goals: I had led student groups to Europe, done research in the British Museum and in Athens, had a Fulbright, published a book, lectured at places like Oxford, Harvard, and Stanford -- all those things which make up a successful academic career. Perhaps it's my mid-life crisis, but I decided to try a new career, one that centers on service and focuses on today's vital issues.

(U) My unhappiness as a professor stemmed from academia's traditional boundaries and ordinary ways of operating. In academics, there are no opportunities for faculty to cross-train or transfer to different departments. No NCS exists to sustain our professional development. I don't miss the needless faculty meetings and endless student counseling that drained my energy. I don't miss grading papers, midterms, and finals. I don't miss the highs and lows of lecturing once or twice a day; the rushes of adrenaline and the consequent crashes are replaced by a serenity of intellectual work on real world problems. And oddly, I don't miss thinking about the ancient Greeks and Romans every day -- my attention is drawn to current events in real time.

(U) I am excited to serve at NSA at this critical juncture in U.S. history. Now I am immersed in a knowledge-based environment, where continuous learning is facilitated and expected. Cross-training and flexible tracks are open to me; TDY's and IC-wide opportunities fill my dreams.

(U) Think of one of those sad plants in plastic 4 inch containers for sale in August, with its soil dried out, its roots reaching through the holes on the bottom, leaves withered and browned. Call me a deadwood professor if you must, but I know that it was just sheer boredom. On 14 July, NSA transplanted me into its deep soil, where I can now stretch, breathe, be nourished, sustained, and even grow.

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*(U//FOUO) Note from SIGINT Communications: Are you a new hire? We'd love to hear YOUR story, as well. Contact us via the "Submit An Item" function on the SIDtoday homepage.*

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